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## U.S. Department of Justice

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### NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Ernesto B. Romero, age 42, of Sterling, Virginia, pleaded guilty today before the Honorable Leonie M. Brinkema, United States District Court Judge, to a charge of failing to collect and pay over to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes.

Romero faces a maximum term of five years of imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000 when sentenced on December 17, 2004.

The investigation of this case resulted from the United States Attorney's recently initiated project called "Operation Financial Compliance". As part of the project's goal of investigating monetary crimes, the Annandale High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Money Laundering Initiative (HIDTA) led an investigation of Ernesto B. Romero, owner of a construction company known as Angelo's Inc., located in Loudoun County. Romero paid his employees nearly \$1.6 million in cash between 2001 and 2003, but failed to collect and pay over to the IRS FICA taxes totaling \$243,167.67.

The Bureau of Customs and Border Protection will administratively forfeit \$20,418.82 from Angelo's Inc. in connection with this case.

The tax charge was investigated jointly by HIDTA and IRS. The forfeiture action was investigated exclusively by HIDTA.

Also making this announcement are Allan J. Doody, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Charles R. Pine, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division, Alexandria Division.

The case was prosecuted for the United States by Special Assistant United States Attorney Jessica Lombardo.